

PTO 2002-2299

Japan, Kokai  
58-122213

AIR CONDITIONER FOR AUTOMOBILES  
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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
Washington, D.C. April, 2002

Translated by: Schreiber Translations, Inc.

Country : Japan  
Document No. : 58-122213  
Document type : Kokai  
Language : Japanese  
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Applicant : Toyota Motor Corporation  
IPC : B 60 H 3/00  
Application date : January 12, 1982  
Publication date : July 20, 1983  
Foreign Language Title : Sharyo Yo Kocho Sochi  
English Title : AIR CONDITIONER FOR AUTOMOBILES

1. Title of the Invention: AIR CONDITIONER FOR AUTOMOBILES

2. Claim

An air conditioner for automobiles characterized by the fact that the inside of an air duct at the downstream of an evaporator is divided into two by a partition plate and separated into a right air duct and a left air duct; temperature regulation mechanisms consisting of an air mixing damper and a heater core are respectively disposed in said left and right air ducts; various kinds of blow-off ports for blowing off an air-conditioned air to a driver's seat are opened at the lowermost flow end of the right air duct; various kinds of blow-off ports for blowing off an air-conditioned air to an assistant's seat are opened at the lowermost downstream end of the right air duct; and it is equipped with an external air sensor that detects an external air temperature, an internal gas sensor that detects a vehicle inside temperature, a solar radiation sensor that detects the amount of solar radiation into a vehicle room, a temperature setter that sets an air-conditioning set temperature in the vehicle, and an arithmetic control circuit that attains a target blow-off temperature for obtaining the above-mentioned air-

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\*Numbers in the margin indicate pagination in the foreign text.

conditioning set temperature based on the above-mentioned external air temperature, temperature in the vehicle room, and amount of sun radiation, sets the degree of opening of the air mixing damper in the above-mentioned right air duct for adjusting the blow-off temperature at the driver's seat so that the blow-off temperature may be lower than the above-mentioned target blow-off temperature by  $1/2$  of the above-mentioned target blow-temperature difference  $\Delta T$  in order to set the blow-off temperature at the driver's seat lower than the blow-off temperature at the assistant's seat by  $\Delta T$ , and sets the degree of opening of the air mixing damper in the above-mentioned right air duct for adjusting the blow-off temperature at the assistant's seat so that the blow-off temperature may be higher than the above-mentioned target blow-off temperature by  $1/2$  of the above-mentioned target blow-temperature difference  $\Delta T$ .

### 3. Detailed explanation of the invention

The present invention pertains to an air conditioner for automobiles, and its purpose is to provide an air conditioner that can set a blow-off temperature at a driver's seat so that it  $1/2$  may be lower than the blow-off temperature at an assistant's seat by a desired temperature and can blow off an air.

In conventional air conditioners for automobiles, it is usual to blow off an air-conditioned air at the same temperature from left and air blow-off ports of a driver's seat and an assistant's seat. However, for a driver in a tense state due to the concentration of nerves on the driving operation, it is desirable in terms of vehicle

safety to blow off an air-conditioned air at a temperature slightly lower than that of a passenger of the assistant's seat. In case an air-conditioned air at the same left and right temperature is blown off like the conventional air conditioners, a considerable difference is generated in the blow-off temperature of blow-off ports at a driver's seat and an assistant's seat by the variation of the flow velocity distribution of the air in the vicinity of a heater core due to the position of an air mixing damper, the state of the heating water distribution in the heater core, etc.. The level of the temperature difference is totally irregular, and the blow-off temperature at the driver's seat is raised or the blow-off temperature at the assistant's seat is raised in accordance with the position of the air mixing damper. Thus, the driver's seat could not always be set to a temperature lower than that of the assistant's seat by a desired temperature.

The present invention solves the above-mentioned problems by adopting an air conditioner for automobiles with the constitution described in the patent claim range and provides an air conditioner for automobiles that can set a blow-off temperature at a driver's seat so that it may be lower than the blow-off temperature at an assistant's seat by a desired temperature and can blow off an air.

Next, referring to the figures, the constitution of the present invention is explained.

Figure 1 shows the constitution of the air conditioner for automobiles of the present invention. At the tip at the upstream of an air duct, an external air intake port 2 for introducing an air

outside a vehicle and an internal air intake port 3 for introducing an air in a vehicle room are installed. These intake ports 2 and 3 can be selectively switched by an external air switching damper 4. Right behind the downstream of the intakes 2 and 3, a fan 5 for blowing off the air absorbed from these intake ports 2 and 3 is installed, and the fan 5 is rotated by a fan motor 6. At the downstream of the fan 5, an evaporator 7 being a heat exchanger for air conditioning is installed and constitutes a freezing cycle along with compressor, condenser, etc., not shown in the figure. Furthermore, at the downstream of said evaporator 7, a partition plate 8 for dividing the inside of the air duct 1 into two is internally inserted, and the inside of the air duct 1 is separated into a right air duct 9 and a left air duct 10.

In these left and right air ducts 9 and 10, each temperature regulation mechanism is disposed. The temperature regulation mechanism at the right air duct 9 consists of an air mixing damper 11 for dividing an air flow flowing through the right air duct 9 into two and a heater core 12 being a heat exchanger for heating which heats one of the branched air flows. The air flow, which is branched by the partition plate 8 and flows from the upstream in the right air duct 9, is branched into a first air flow being heated through the heater core 12 and a second air flow which bypasses the heater core 12 and re-joined and mixed at the downstream of the air mixing damper 11, so that the blow-off temperature is regulated. In other words, the blow-off temperature of the right air duct is freely controlled by changing the degree of opening of the air mixing damper 11 and

adjusting the distribution ratio of the above-mentioned first and second air flows. Also, the temperature regulation mechanism of the left air duct 10 consists of an air mixing damper 13 and a heater core 12, and similarly to the above-mentioned right air duct 9, the blow-off temperature of the left air duct is freely controlled by changing the degree of opening of the air mixing damper 13 and adjusting the distribution ratio of the air flows. Also, in the example shown in the figure, one wide core which crosses the left and right air ducts 9 and 10 is used in the heater core 12, and, and the respective left and right segments of the core are discriminated and used as each heater core for an air duct. An engine coolant not shown in the figure is supplied in a circulatory type as a heater heat source to the heater core 12.

The above-mentioned air mixing damper 11 is independently opened and closed by a damper actuator 14, and the air mixing damper 13 is independently opened and closed by a damper actuator 15. These damper actuators 14 and 15 are respectively separately instructed and controlled by an arithmetic control circuit 16 that will be mentioned later.

At the lowermost downstream position of the right air duct 9 of the air duct 1, heater blow-off port 17, vent blow-off port 18, and defroster blow-off port 19 for a driver's seat side (right side) for blowing off an air-conditioned air into a vehicle room are respectively opened. These blow-off ports 17, 18, and 19 are respectively selectively opened and closed by dampers 20 and 21.

Similarly, at the lowermost downstream position of the left air

duct 10 of the air duct 1, heater blow-off port 22, vent blow-off port 23, and defroster blow-off port 24 for an assistant's seat side (left side) are respectively opened, and these blow-off ports 22, 23, and 24 are respectively selectively opened and closed by dampers 25 and 26. The dampers 20 and 25 are coaxially supported, and the dampers 21 and 26 are coaxially supported. They are respectively opened and closed by damper actuators 27 and 28 for rotating each support shaft. Therefore, the left and right heater blow-off ports 17 and 22, left and right vent blow-off ports 18 and 23, and left and right defroster blow-off ports 19 and 24 are respectively simultaneously closed or opened. The above-mentioned damper actuators 27 and 28 are instructed and controlled by the arithmetic control circuit 16 that will be mentioned later.

The above-mentioned left and right heater blow-off ports 17 and 22 are generally installed below an instrument panel of a vehicle, and a heating air is blown off to the foots of the left and right seating passengers. Also, the above-mentioned left and right vent blow-off ports 18 and 23 are generally installed at the left and right of the front of the instrument panel and blows off an air-conditioned air to the upper part of the body of the passenger at the driver's seat and the passenger at the assistant's seat. These heater blow-off ports 17 and 22 and vent blow-off ports 18 and 23 are selectively opened and closed by the dampers 20 and 25.

Also, the above-mentioned left and right defroster blow-off ports 19 and 24 blow off the air to the front window of an automobile not shown in the figure and realizes a window defrost. The defroster



blow-off ports 19 and 24 are selectively opened and closed by the dampers 21 and 26 or partially opened.

The arithmetic control circuit 16 is a circuit that controls the respective damper actuators 14, 15, 27, and 28 according to the instruction from a temperature setter 29 and controls a fan motor speed controller 30 for rotating the fan motor 6. A microcomputer is generally used.

The temperature setter 29 is installed in an air-conditioning control panel in the vehicle room and sets an air-conditioning set temperature  $T_{SET}$  in the vehicle room and a blow-off temperature difference  $\Delta T$  of the left and right blow-off ports. /4

In the above-mentioned arithmetic control circuit 16,  $T_o$ ,  $T_r$ , and ST signals are respectively input from an external air sensor 31 for detecting an external air temperature  $T_o$ , an internal air sensor 32 for detecting a temperature  $T_r$  in the vehicle room, and a solar radiation sensor 33 for detecting an amount ST of solar radiation into the vehicle room. The arithmetic control circuit 16 receives the external air temperature  $T_o$ , the temperature  $T_r$  in the vehicle room, and the amount ST of solar radiation and calculates a target blow-off temperature  $T_A$  for maintaining the vehicle room inside at the above-mentioned air-conditioning set temperature  $T_{SET}$  according to the following equation (1).

$$T_A = K_1 \cdot T_{SET} - K_2 \cdot T_o - K_3 \cdot T_r - K_4 \cdot ST + C \quad (1)$$

(However,  $K_1$ - $K_4$  and C are constants.)

Next, the target blow-off temperature  $T_{AR}$  of the right blow-off port

being a blow-off port at the driver's seat and the target blow-off temperature  $T_{AL}$  of the left blow-off port being a blow-off port at the assistant's seat are respectively calculated according to the following equations (2) and (3).

$$T_{AR} = T_A - \Delta T/2 \quad (2)$$

$$T_{AL} = T_A + \Delta T/2 \quad (3)$$

(However,  $\Delta T$  is a desired temperature difference of the left and right blow-off ports.)

After  $T_{AR}$  and  $T_{AL}$  are attained from the above-mentioned equations (2) and (3), the arithmetic control circuit 16 gives damper opening degree signals corresponding to  $T_{AR}$  and  $T_{AL}$  to the damper actuators 14 and 15 for opening and closing the air mixing dampers 11 and 13 so that the blow-off temperature at the driver's seat and at the assistant's seat may be respectively  $T_{AR}$  and  $T_{AL}$  and moves the air mixing dampers 11 and 13 to opening degree positions for giving the above-mentioned  $T_{AR}$  and  $T_{AL}$ . Also, the arithmetic control circuit 16 calculates an optimum fan speed corresponding to the above-mentioned target blow-off temperature  $T_A$  and outputs a control signal based on the result to the fan speed controller 30.

The fan speed controller 30 consists of well-known devices such as variable resistor and pulse speed controller and controls the fan motor 6 based on the control signal being input from the arithmetic control circuit 16 so that the fan 5 may have an optimum air blow fan speed. Figure 2 shows an example of a characteristic curve showing the relationship between the target blow-off temperature  $T_A$  and the fan motor voltage  $V_1$  for giving an optimum fan speed. The

relationship between  $T_A$  and  $V_1$  is shown by the following equation (4).

$$V_1 = F(T_A) \quad (4)$$

(However,  $F(x)$  represents a function.)

The device of the present invention with the above-mentioned constitution is operated as follows, and an air-conditioning state having a desired temperature difference  $\Delta T$  in the left and right blow-off temperatures is realized.

First, the arithmetic control circuit 16 reads the external air temperature  $T_o$ , the temperature  $T_r$  in the vehicle room, and the amount  $ST$  of solar radiation detected from the external air sensor 31, internal air sensor 32, and solar radiation sensor 33 and calculates the target blow-off temperature  $T_A$  based on the above-mentioned equation (1).

Then, the target blow-off temperature  $T_{AR}$  of the right blow-off port being a blow-off port at the driver's seat and the target blow-off temperature  $T_{AL}$  of the left blow-off port being a blow-off port at the assistant's seat are calculated by the above-mentioned equations (2) and (3).

Next, the damper opening degrees (damper positions) of the air mixing damper 11 for the right side and the air mixing damper 13 for the left side are calculated so that the blow-off temperature of the right blow-off port and the blow-off temperature of the left blow-off port may be the above-mentioned target blow-off temperatures  $T_{AR}$  and  $T_{AL}$ , respectively. Now, if the damper opening degree of the right air mixing damper 11 is  $S_R$  and the damper opening degree of the left

air mixing damper 13 is  $S_L$ , the damper opening degrees can be attained from the following equations.

$$S_R = G_1(T_{AR}) \quad (5)$$

$$S_L = G_2(T_{AL}) \quad (6) \quad /5$$

Also, the detailed function types of  $G_1(x)$  and  $G_2(x)$  are determined by the shape, structure, etc., of the air duct 1.

The arithmetic control circuit 16 attains the above-mentioned damper opening degrees  $S_R$  and  $S_L$  and outputs instructions to the damper actuator 14 for the right side and the damper actuator 15 for the left side and sets the air mixing damper 11 for the right side to the damper opening degree  $S_R$  and the air mixing damper 13 for the left side to the damper opening degree  $S_L$ , respectively. Furthermore, the arithmetic control circuit 16 gives a control signal to the fan speed controller 30 so that the fan 5 may be rotated at an optimum fan speed corresponding to the target blow-off temperature  $T_A$ . Thus, the fan speed controller 30 applies the fan motor voltage  $V_1$  according to the equation (4) (see the characteristic curve of Figure 3) to the fan motor 6 and controls the fan 5 at an optimum fan speed at that time.

As a result of the above control, the air of the blow-off temperature  $T_{AR} = T_A - \Delta T/2$  is blown to the driver from the right blow-off port, for example, the right vent blow-off port 18, and the air of the blow-off temperature  $T_{AL} = T_A + \Delta T/2$  is blown to the assistant from the left vent blow-off port 23 being a left blow-off port, so that the driver's seat side is always suppressed to the blow-off temperature lower than that of the assistant's side by the

set temperature difference  $\Delta T$ . Needless to say, the temperature difference  $\Delta T$  can be freely changed to a desired value, and  $\Delta T$  may also always be automatically set as a fixed value from the beginning instead of inputting from the temperature setter 29.

A flow chart of the above-mentioned operation is shown in Figure 3.

Also, in the above-mentioned operation explanation, the blow-off temperature  $T_{AR}$  of the blow-off port at the driver's seat and the blow-off temperature  $T_{AL}$  of the blow-off port at the assistant's seat has been  $T_{AL} - T_{AR} = \Delta T$ , however if  $\Delta T = 0$ , the left and right same blow-off temperature can also be simply set similarly to the conventional air conditioners. In the conventional air conditioners, since the air mixing damper has been one unit, there is a difference in the blow-off temperature between the driver's seat and the assistant's seat due to the flow velocity distribution of the air in the vicinity of the temperature regulation mechanism, etc., and the temperature difference is increased at the driver's seat or at the assistant's seat with the change of the degree of opening of the air mixing damper. However, according to the device of the present invention, when  $\Delta T = 0$  is set, even if the degree of opening of the air mixing dampers is changed, the blow-off temperature at the driver's seat and at the assistant's seat can be accurately set.

Since the present invention has the above-mentioned constitution and operation, the driver, who requires an air-conditioning temperature slightly lower than that of the passenger of the assistant's seat due to the use of nerves in driving, can be set

to a blow-off temperature lower than the blow-off temperature at the assistant's seat by a desired temperature, and each pleasant air-conditioning state can be realized at the driver's seat and at the assistant's seat. Also, according to the present invention, the blow-off temperature at the driver's seat is prevented from being higher than the blow-off temperature at the assistant's seat or the blow-off temperature at the assistant's seat is prevented from being higher than the blow-off temperature at the driver's seat due to the change of the degree of opening of the air mixing dampers during the air conditioning control. Thus, a required air-conditioning state can be accurately realized and maintained.

#### 4. Brief description of the figures

Figure 1 is a constitutional diagram showing the air conditioner for automobiles. Figure 2 is a characteristic diagram showing the relationship between a target blow-off temperature and a fan motor voltage. Figure 3 is a flow chart /6 showing the operation of the device of the present invention.

- 1 Air duct
- 5 Fan
- 6 Fan motor
- 7 Evaporator
- 8 Partition plate
- 9 Right air duct
- 10 Left air duct
- 11 Air mixing damper

12 Heater core  
 13 Air mixing damper  
 16 Arithmetic controller  
 17, 22 Left and right heater blow-off ports  
 18, 23 Left and right vent blow-off ports  
 19, 24 Left and right defroster blow-off ports  
 30 Temperature setter  
 31 External air sensor  
 32 Internal air sensor  
 33 Solar radiation sensor  
 $T_o$  External air temperature  
 $T_r$  Temperature in a vehicle room  
 $ST$  Amount of solar radiation  
 $T_{SET}$  Air-conditioning set temperature  
 $\Delta T$  Blow-off temperature difference of the left and right blow-off ports  
 $T_A$  Target blow-off temperature  
 $T_{AR}$  Blow-off temperature of the right blow-off port  
 $T_{AL}$  Blow-off temperature of the left blow-off port

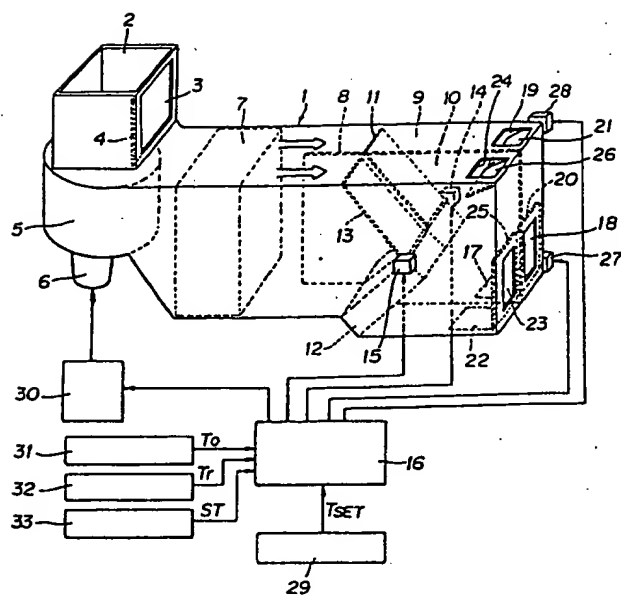


Figure 1

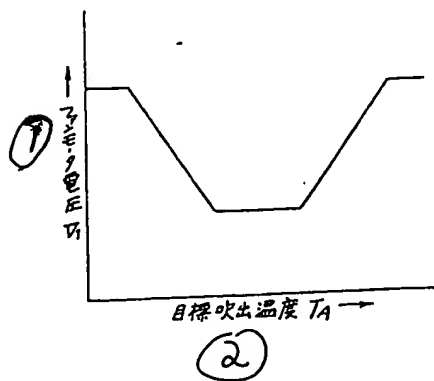


Figure 2:

1. Fan motor voltage  $V_1$
2. Target blow-off temperature  $T_A$



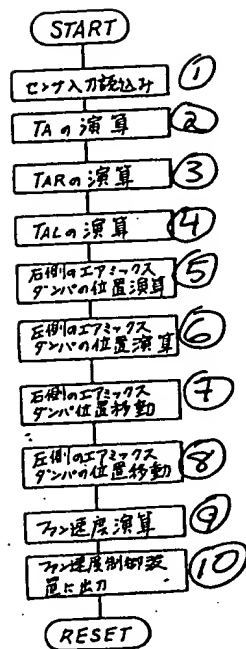


Figure 3:

1. Sensor input reading
2.  $T_A$  calculation
3.  $T_{AR}$  calculation
4.  $T_{AL}$  calculation
5. Position calculation of the right air mixing damper
6. Position calculation of the left air mixing damper
7. Position movement of the right air mixing damper
8. Position movement of the left air mixing damper
9. Fan speed calculation
10. Output to the fan speed controller

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AI 344 48307

AI 0122213  
JUL 1983

(54) AIR-CONDITIONER FOR AUTOMOBILE

(11) 58-122213 (A) (43) 20.7.1983 (19) JP  
(21) Appl. No. 57-3056 (22) 12.1.1982  
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(51) Int. Cl. B60H3/00

**PURPOSE:** To improve the comfortableness both of a drivers seat and an assistant's seat by a method wherein the down stream part of an evaporator is divided respectively into air passages for a driver's seat and an assistant's seat, wherein each is provided with temperature regulator, and the temperature on the driver's seat side is lowered and that on the assistant's seat side is raised by a half of the difference between the flow-off air temperature of both seats.

**CONSTITUTION:** The arithmetic control circuit 16 operates the target blow-off air temperature  $T_A$ , the flow-off air temperatures at both seats  $T_{AR}$ ,  $T_{AL}$  by the use of the open air temperature  $T_o$ , the room temperature  $T_r$ , the solar heat quantity  $ST$ , the preset temperature in the car room and the difference  $\Delta T$  between the temperature on the driver's seat and on the assistant's seat. At this time,  $T_{AR}$  is designated to be lower by one half of  $\Delta T$  than  $T_A$ ,  $T_{AL}$  is designated to be higher by one half of  $\Delta T$  than  $T_A$  so that the difference between the blow-off air temperatures on both seats makes  $\Delta T$ . The apertures of the air mixing dampers 11, 13 are controlled by these designated blow-off air temperatures  $T_{AR}$ ,  $T_{AL}$ . The fan 6 is controlled through the fan speed controller 30 so as to meet the target blow-off air temperature  $T_A$ . In this structure, secure air-conditioning is kept in the car room to give comfortable conditions for the driver's and assistant.

